

The Global Harmony Foundation

Introduction

Global Harmony (GH) is a small, humanitarian foundation with world-wide reach and vision coupled with innovative forms of help for the deprived but yet hopeful. It was established in Solothurn, Switzerland, in January 1989, with a tax-deductible status. The Foundation is non-political, non-denominational, and non-profit-making.

In a world where 1,000 million people live in abject poverty and ignorance, and where the destruction of the environment is rampant, GH endeavours to facilitate, on a modest scale, solutions to some of these problems through cost-effective projects. Being a small, non-bureaucratic foundation, GH has the following advantages:

- A. It is accepted and understood at the 'grassroots' level.
- B. It has an overall reach and penetrability coupled with the ability to promote local participation.
- C. It is flexible, creative, and quick in adjusting to changing circumstances.
- D. Its projects are cost-effective and straightforward.
- E. Its activities and finances lend themselves to overall monitoring, control, and evaluation.

Although GH is a young Foundation, most of its founders have many years of experience in the fields of human, social, and environmental, development. Through these long experiences, GH founders came to the following conclusions, namely that:

1. Development work can be facilitated more efficiently and effectively through small, non-bureaucratic organizations, than through large bureaucratic ones;
2. Human and social development works need to be juxtaposed with environmental care;
3. Projects need to be carefully selected and formulated;
4. Project staff need to be well selected;
5. Project funds need to be managed and controlled meticulously;
6. External assistance needs to aim at facilitating the empowerment of the local participants to achieve self-reliance, and the handing over of the project when once this has been realized; and
7. The methods utilized need to be participatory and non-directive.

GH Projects: an Overview

A GH project is the result of a studious and participatory, dynamic interaction amongst the different parties concerned in a specific socio-cultural milieu. The resources and creative powers are tapped to the maximum in accordance with the principles of the Foundation, which are to:

- a) Nurture initiative, responsibility, and participation of the beneficiary population, through encouragement of help for self-help and co-help;
- b) Encourage the beneficiary population to achieve self-reliance — and self-realization for their own benefit, the benefit of their family, and the community and its environment;
- c) Prepare the local counterparts to take over the project at the opportune time; and
- d) Generate a system of ethics whereby helping the underprivileged and caring for the environment become the norm rather than the exception.

This renders GH an innovative mosaic in development work. Its secret for success lies in its flexibility, adaptability, versatility, creativity, and down-to-earth worthiness. Moreover, it is a dynamic developmental process harmonizing with changing circumstances and opportunities. Each GH project is unique. However, despite its intrinsic uniqueness, a general GH programme has been devised, through years of experience, which is relevant and adaptable, embodying: Education for sustainable development; Medico-nutritional practice, pre-schooling, and home economics; GH Beneficiary participation; and GH General Objectives, which comprise the following, namely to:

- i) Qualify the participant population, through functional technical assistance, in order to achieve self-reliance and self-realization;
- ii) Ameliorate, in a sustainable manner, the health of children, mothers, and their families;
- iii) Disseminate relevant, vital information to the participant population on nutrition, health, hygiene, family and home management, and environmental care;
- iv) Achieve cognitive, effective and behavioural changes in the participant population in order to improve their lives and their environment;
- v) Provide vocational training to the participant population in order that they may gain a living through skilled work; and
- vi) Raise the awareness of the participant population regarding the interdependence of all forms of life of this globe, in order to achieve enriching harmony.

As to specific, operational objectives, these vary from project to project. Therefore, abiding by GH basic principles, these objectives are formulated with the local staff of each project.

GH Methods and National Committees

These methods are non-paternalistic, non-directive, and participatory, with the aim of nurturing self-confidence, self-esteem, self-reliance, self-development, and environmental awareness, amongst the participant population. Moreover, built-in systems of training, monitoring, and evaluation, are embodied in these methods. In addition, in order to achieve multiple effects and project sustainability, networking and twinning with local institutions and corporations from part of GH methods.

Though each GH project is unique, with its own needs, priorities, and programmes, a GH core staff may consist of a Social Worker an Educator, a Medical Doctor, a Vocational Instructor, a Psychologist, a Home Economist, and a scientifically-trained Ecologist.

With the aim of furthering GH objectives and enhancing its basic principles, every GH project has a National Committee which formulates the policies of the project in accordance with GH principles, maintains continuous communication with GH Headquarters, and assists the local project coordinator and staff in project implementation and support. The National Committee consists of donors, project participants, and eminent nationals, the number of members varying from 5 to 9 persons.

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